

VLR-6/15/76 NRHP-11/21/76

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED
DATE ENTERED NOV. 21, 1976

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC
Old Middlesex County Courthouse (Preferred)
AND/OR COMMON
Middlesex County Woman's Club

2 LOCATION

S side of tow route 1002, SW corner of intersection of town
Routes 1002 and 1005.

STREET & NUMBER

NOT FOR PUBLICATION
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

CITY, TOWN
Urbanna

VICINITY OF First (Thomas N. Downing)

STATE
Virginia

CODE
51

COUNTY
Middlesex

CODE
119

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER: Meeting Place

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME
Trustees of Middlesex Woman's Club c/o Mrs. E. Garland Payne, President

STREET & NUMBER
Virginia Street

CITY, TOWN
Urbanna

VICINITY OF

STATE
Virginia 23175

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Middlesex County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Saluda

STATE
Virginia 23149

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS(2)-See continuation sheet #1

TITLE
(1) Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory

DATE

1959

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE
D. C.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

#1

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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

- (2) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey
1970, 1975 State
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission
Richmond, Virginia 23219

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Old Middlesex County Courthouse is located amidst commercial properties on the main street (Virginia Street) of the old Colonial seaport town of Urbanna. The building is set off from its neighbors by being the only structure of character and antiquity in the immediate vicinity. Its setting is enhanced by a shallow front yard planted with English boxwood and dogwoods. The grounds, including a small grassy yard to the west, are enclosed by a low, brick wall erected in this century.

The original eighteenth-century portions of the former courthouse include only the brick walls. Their outside dimensions are approximately 75 feet by 27 feet. Much patched and repaired, the bonding of the walls is barely discernible. The main parts, however, are in Flemish bond; the area below the beveled water table appears to be English bond. The brickwork may have employed a glazing pattern, but many layers of paint and some stuccoing make this impossible to determine. The sizes and shapes of the original openings are likewise difficult to determine, for all of the openings have been altered into pointed, Gothic-style windows or doors with intersecting tracery in the upper portions. The original arrangement of the openings probably consisted of three windows on each side with an entrance in the west end. There seems to have been some shifting of windows on the south side to accommodate an additional window near the west corner, for this window does not appear in an early photograph. Additions to the building (all ca. 1910) include a gabled entrance vestibule at the west corner of the north side and a matching projection at the east corner of the same side. A similar projection is at the east corner of the south side. A rectangular apse has been added to the east end.

The building is currently covered by a steeply pitched gable roof sheathed in slate. The original roof was probably gabled with a similar pitch. The present roof is supported on a series of exposed, hammer-beam-like trusses, suggesting that no original timbers survive. An old photograph shows the building as it appeared prior to the last additions, with scrolled Gothic Revival bargeboards and pinnacles at the gable ends.

The interior of the main part of the building is one large room except for the westernmost bay which has been partitioned off from the rest. The interior of the apse is treated as a large niche ornamented with a somewhat primitive painting of the Magi, executed in 1911 by Anne Fletcher of Richmond. The remaining walls are plain plaster with a simple chair rail and baseboard. None of the interior trim appears to date earlier than the early twentieth century. The floor is pine boards; underneath is only a crawl space. No indication of the original arrangement of the interior is evident.

The building is kept in a generally good state of repair. It is used regularly for local activities and meetings.

CCL

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Old Middlesex County Courthouse survives as one of Virginia's eleven Colonial courthouses, one of an outstanding collection of pre-Revolutionary civic architecture unmatched in quantity by any other state. Although the building has been much changed during its two centuries of existence, and only its patched walls are original, it remains the principal historical focal point of the old seaport village of Urbanna. Many important aspects of county and state history are reflected in the various uses to which the building has been put.

Middlesex County, located in the heart of Virginia's Tidewater region, between the Rappahannock and Piankatank Rivers, was formed from Lancaster County about 1669. The court originally met at what is now the settlement of Stormont, but in 1685 it was ordered that a courthouse be erected in the newly established village of Urbanna, the port of entry for the county. However, because there was no bridge or ferry across the adjacent creek, residents of the lower part of the county complained that the proposed location would be an inconvenient one. The matter was not resolved for some sixty years until a ferry could be established, and even then there were complaints about the tolls.

Construction of the courthouse was finally begun in 1745. The order for building the courthouse was probably recorded the previous year, but unfortunately, the order books covering that year have been lost. Official approval for the new building and its location was granted somewhat belatedly (probably after the building was finished) by the Governor's Council on April 24, 1746. An entry in the Executive Journal for that day records: "It is ordered that the Courthouse of the County aforesaid be removed to Urbanna according to the Prayer of the said Petition." The county, by January 1745, had already made payment to one John Rodes, Jr., for his care of the courthouse.

The routine business of the county was conducted in the courthouse for the next hundred years. Major events taking place there include a 1771 trial of six Baptist ministers for preaching without a license. The four who were convicted continued to preach from their jail windows for the forty-six days of their imprisonment. On the eve of the Revolution, in 1774, freeholders met at the courthouse and issued resolutions against taxation without representation. During the war itself the local Committee of Safety met in the building to try members of the local gentry for suspected loyalty to the Crown.

Even after Urbanna had served the county for nearly a century there were those who felt the courthouse should be located elsewhere. Finally, in 1847, the Middlesex justices voted against funding further repairs to the building and decided to move the county seat to the more accessible settlement of Saluda. A new courthouse was completed in 1852, and the old courthouse was sold at auction that same year to

* See Continuation Sheet #2

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8. SIGNIFICANCE

Captain John Bailey for \$600.00. Bailey had the building renovated into an interdenominational chapel, restyling its architecture in the Gothic taste.

During the War between the States, the building was used for a time as barracks for Confederate troops. It was shelled by Union gunboats, but little damage resulted. After the war it continued as a union chapel until 1896 when it was sold. It changed hands several times until 1907 when it was acquired by Christ Church Parish of Middlesex. Dedicated as an Episcopal chapel known as Epiphany in 1920, it served in that capacity until 1948 when improved travel conditions made the chapel no longer necessary. It was in that year that the building was deconsecrated and deeded to the Middlesex County Woman's Club. It remains the club's headquarters and serves as the scene of various community and private functions.

CCL
MTP

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Chowning, May Gayle. "From Court to Church to ^{Club} Courthouse," Richmond Times-Dispatch, Richmond, Virginia, April 17, 1949.
- Hall, W. L. (Editor). Executive Journals, Council of Colonial Virginia, Vol. 5, pp. 201, 208.
- Middlesex County Orders, 1745. p. 52.
- Street, Elwood, "Historic Middlesex County Courthouse," Richmond Times-Dispatch, Richmond, Virginia, September 13, 1942.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,8	36,0	9,4,0	4,1	6,6	3,9,0	B					
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING						
C							D					

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE

June, 1976

STREET & NUMBER

221 Governor Street

TELEPHONE

(804) 786-3143

CITY OR TOWN

Richmond

STATE

Virginia 23219

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE X

LOCAL X

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE Junius R. Fishburne, Jr., Executive Director
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE JUN 15 1976

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I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

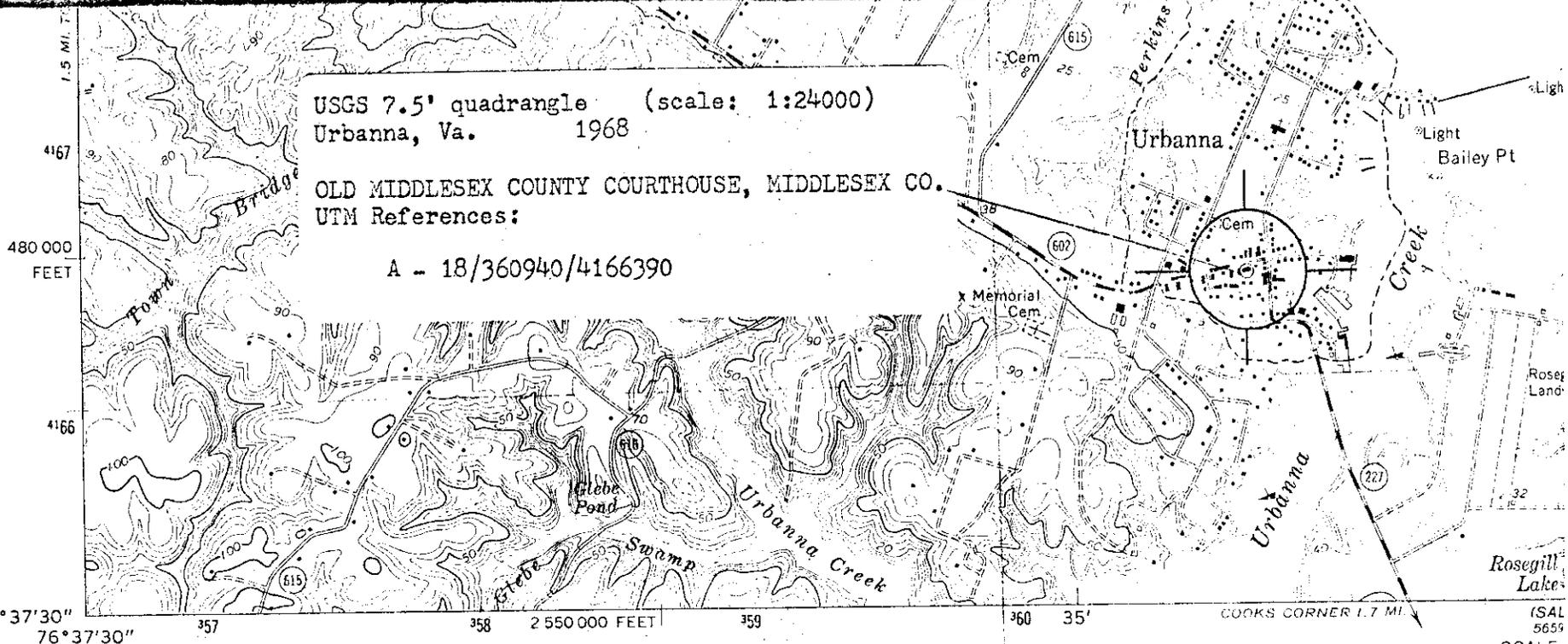
DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

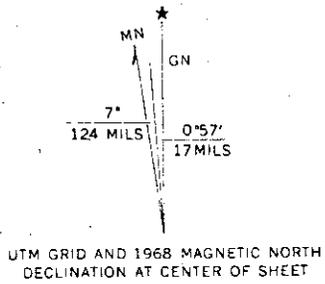


USGS 7.5' quadrangle (scale: 1:24000)
 Urbanna, Va. 1968

OLD MIDDLESEX COUNTY COURTHOUSE, MIDDLESEX CO.
 UTM References:
 A - 18/360940/4166390

(SHACKLEFORDS)
 5659 11 SW

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey
 Control by USGS and USC&GS
 Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial
 photographs taken 1967. Field checked 1968
 Supersedes U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey map dated 1946
 Selected hydrographic data compiled from USC&GS Chart 605-SC (1969)
 This information is not intended for navigational purposes
 Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum
 10,000-foot grid based on Virginia coordinate system, south zone
 1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 18,
 shown in blue
 Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence and field lines where
 generally visible on aerial photographs. This information is unchecked



CONTOUR INTERVAL
 DOTTED LINES REPRESENT
 DATUM IS MEAN SEA LEVEL
 DEPTH CURVES AND SOUNDINGS IN
 SHORELINE SHOWN REPRESENTS THE
 THE MEAN RANGE OF TIDE

THIS MAP COMPLIES WITH NATIONAL MAP ACT
 FOR SALE BY U.S. GEOLOGICAL
 AND VIRGINIA DIVISION OF MINERAL RESOURCES
 A FOLDER DESCRIBING TOPOGRAPHIC MAP